

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 PM-09 NSC-10 SS-14 RSC-01 T-03 CIAE-00

INR-09 NSAE-00 MC-02 AID-20 IGA-02 OMB-01 IO-13

ACDA-19 L-03 INRE-00 ORM-03 RSR-01 /125 W
----- 008648

P 091005 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3671

DOD WASHDC

CINCPAC

JCS

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 MANILA 2769

CINCPAC FOR ATTENTION OF ADMIRAL GAYLER

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: RP - PINT PFOR MARR MOPS MASS

SUBJECT: PHIL/ MUSLIM CONFLICT: GOP MILITARY ASSESSMENT AND URGENT
REQUEST FOR MAP AID

1. I HAVE JUST RECEIVED A LETTER FROM ROMULO WITH SEVERAL ENCLOSURES WHICH STATES THAT HE HAS BEEN REQUESTED BY PRESIDENT MARCOS TO UNDERSCORE THE URGENCY OF THE MATTERS DISCUSSED IN THESE DOCUMENTS. THE ENCLOSURES INCLUDE A LETTER FROM GENERAL ESPINO, CHIEF OF STAFF, AFP, ADDRESSED TO MARCOS THROUGH THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE. THERE IS ALSO A LETTER SIGNED BY MARCOS ASKING THAT THE DOCUMENTS BE TRANSMITTED TO ME, WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE THAT THEY BE PASSED ON TO ADMIRAL GAYLER. PRESUMABLY THE LETTER SIGNED BY ESPINO IS THEIR OWN JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF APPRECIATION OF THE SITUATION IN THE SOUTH WHICH WAS PROMISED ADMIRAL GAYLER BY MARCOS.

2. ALSO INCLUDED ARE REQUESTED LISTS OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT WHICH ARE BEING PASSED URGENTLY TO GENERAL GRIMSLEY OF JUSMAG FOR THEIR STUDY AND TRANSMITTAL TO HIGHER HEADQUARTERS.

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3. THE LETTER FROM ESPINO TO THE PRESIDENT IS LENGTHY, BUT UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES I BELIEVE CABLE TRANSMISSION IN ITS ENTIRETY TO CINCPAC AND WASHINGTON TO BE APPROPRIATE.

BEGIN TEXT:

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT,

I HAVE THE HONOR TO REPORT THE SITUATION PRESENTLY OBTAINING IN MINDANAO IN THE LIGHT OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE REGION.

A SITUATION OF REBELLION PREVAILS OVER THE MUSLIM PROVINCES OF MINDANAO COVERING A THIRD OF THE SOUTHERNMOST PORTION OF THE COUNTRY WITH A POPULATION OF 4,418,876. THE AREA ENCOMPASSES THE PROVINCES OF COTABATO, SOUTH COTABATO, LANA DEL NORTE, LANA DEL SUR, ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE, ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR AND SULU, AND INCLUDES THE CITIES OF BASILAN AND ZAMBOANGA. THE MUSLIMS IN THE AREA NUMBER 2,138,766 AND THEY OUTNUMBER THE CHRISTIANS IN THE PROVINCES OF SULU (76.9 PERCENT), LANA DEL SUR (73.9 PERCENT), ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR (51.3 PERCENT) AND COTABATO (51.2 PERCENT).

THE MUSLIM REBELS HAVE NOW ORGANIZED ON PAPER WHAT IS REFERRED TO AS THE SUPREME REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL TO UNITE AND OVERSEE THE OPERATIONS OF ALL MUSLIM SECESSIONIST ORGANIZATIONS NOTABLY THE MINDANAO INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT AND THE MORO NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT AND THEIR ARMED ELEMENTS HAVE CALLED THEMSELVES THE MUSLIM REVOLUTIONARY FORCES (MRF).

THE MRF ARE NOW IN ACTUAL PHYSICAL OCCUPANCY AND CONTROL OF THE GREATER PART OF SULU; PARTS OF ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE AND ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR; TWO-THIRDS OF COTABATO AND BASILAN ISLAND; AND PART OF SOUTH COTABATO. IN SULU, THE GOVERNMENT FORCES ARE IN ACTUAL OCCUPANCY OF ONLY THE CENTERS OF THE TOWNS OR POBLACIONES WHILE ALL OTHER AREAS ARE UNDER
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THE CONTROL OF THE REBELS. IN BASILAN ISLAND, THE REBELS HAVE OCCUPIED ALL THE BIG PLANTATIONS WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THOSE NEAR THE CITY PROPER.

THE TOTAL ESTIMATED STRENGTH OF THE MUSLIM REVOLUTIONARY FORCES (MRF) IS 16,900 DISTRIUBUTED AS FOLLOWS:

COTABATO ---6,000
SULU----4,000
THE TWO ZAMBOANGAS----3,100
SOUTH COTABATO----2,000
THE TWO LANAOS ----1,800
TOTAL---16,900

THE REBELS ARE NOW ARMED WITH HIGH- POWERED RIFLES OF VARIOUS MAKES THAT INCLUDE BRITISH, (FAL & CAL), BELGIAN (FN), SWISS (ZIG), GERMAN (PAAL) AND AMERICAN (BAR, M14, M16, M1, AND M79) MODELS. IN ADDITION, THEY ARE NOW EQUIPPED WITH CREW- SERVED WEAPONS (AMERICAN 50 CAL AND .30 CAL MACHINEGUNS ANDMORTARS), ROCKETS AND LAND MINES. LAND MINES WERE USED AGAINST GOVERNMENT ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS IN JOLO AND MORTARS WERE ALSO USED IN THE LAKE SEIT AREA IN THE ISLAND OF JOLO. MOST OF THESE ARMAMENTS AND AMMUNITION WERE SUPPLIED BY FOREIGN SYMPATHIZERS/ SUPPORTERS. CONFIRMED SOURCES ARE SABAH, MALAYSIA, PAKISTAN AND LIBYA.

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 PM-09 NSC-10 SS-14 RSC-01 T-03 OMB-01

INRE-00 ACDA-19 AID-20 L-03 CIAE-00 INR-09 NSAE-00

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P 091005 Z MAR 73
FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3672
DOD WASHDC

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 3 MANILA 2769

CINCPAC FOR ATTENTION OF ADMIRAL GAYLER

THE REBEL FORCES HAVE BEEN TRAINED EITHER LOCALLY OR OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY NOTABLY IN SABAH. THEIR LOCAL TRAINING PROGRAMS ARE BEING SUPERVISED BY FOREIGN ADVISERS. TRAINING SITES HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED IN SULU AND COTABATO. ACCORDING TO CAPTURED ENEMY PERSONNEL, AGENTS AND INFORMERS, THE TRAINING PERIOD OF THE REBELS VARIES FROM 3 MONTHS TO 2 YEARS DEPENDING ON THE SPECIALIZATION AND UTILIZATION OF THE CADRES.

THE PRESENT STATE OF MORALE OF THE ENEMY IS HIGH BECAUSE OF THEIR INITIAL SUCCESSES RESULTING IN THE WIPING OUT OF SEVERAL DETACHMENTS OR GARRISONS IN THE PROVINCES OF SULU, BASILAN, LANA O DEL SUR AND LATELY, COTABATO. IN ADDITION, THE SUPPORT THEY HAD BEEN RECEIVING FROM FOREIGN SOURCES IN THE FORM OF MONEY, ARMS AND AMMUNITION IS VERY ADEQUATE.

THE DISORDER IN MINDANAO SINCE 1970 HAS TAKEN A HEAVY TOLL OF ABOUT 2,000 IN TERMS OF HUMAN LIVES
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FROM THE MILITARY AND CIVILIAN SECTORS. IN COTABATO ALONE, THE FOLLOWING ARE THE CASUALTIES SINCE MARCH 1 TODATE:

KILLED--4 OFFRS, 33 EM, 10 CIVILIANS
WOUNDED--6 OFFRS, 58 EM, 2 CIVILIANS
MISSING --1 OFFR, 20 EM

FURTHERMORE, NUMEROUS CIVILIANS (ABOUT 500,000 BOTH CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM) HAVE BEEN DISPLACED, LEAVING THEIR HOMES AND FARMS FOR FEAR OF BEING CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE. THE DISORDER IN THE REGION STARTED OUT AS PETTY QUARRELS BETWEEN MUSLIMS AND CHRISTIANS OVER LAND AND LAND RENTS IN 1970. POLITICAL LEADERS IN THE MUSLIM AREAS HAVE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF THIS SITUATION TO ENTRENCH THEIR POSITIONS, TOWARDS MUSLIM AND CHRISTIAN LEADERS, THUS INJECTING A NEW DIMENSION OF RELIGIOUS CONFLICT. IT HAS ALSO

BEEN TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF BY COMMUNIST AND SECESSIONIST IDEOLOGUES TO MOUNT AN OPEN REBELLION AND INSURRECTION AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT. THE USUAL SOURCES OF SUPPORT OF THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT HAVE BEEN TAPPED FOR BOTH ARMS AND TRAINING. THESE INCLUDE BOTH MAOIST AND MOSCOW-ORIENTED COMMUNIST CADRES, FANATICAL MUSLIM SECESSIONIST COUNTRIES LIKE LIBYA, PAKISTAN, MALAYSIA AND SABAH WITH DREAMS OF SETTING UP A SEPARATE STATE AND LOOKING COVETOUSLY AT THE RICH ISLANDS OF THE SULU ARCHIPELAGO AND MINDANAO. WITH THE AID OF LOCAL MUSLIM PROVOCATEURS AND LEADERS WHO ARE EASILY ENTICED BY PROFFERS OF FINANCIAL REWARDS, THE CHIEF MINISTER OF ABAH, TUN MJSTAPHA BIN HARUN HAS SUCCEEDED IN SETTING UP A REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL OF WHICH HE IS CHAIRMAN, TAKING INTO HIS FOLD ALL ELEMENTS THAT HOLD ANY GRIEVANCE AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT AND THE FILIPINO PEOPLE, VALID OR NOT.

SWELLING THE RANKS OF REBELS ARE OUTLAWS, CRIMINALS, PIRATES AS WELL AS THE MUSLIM YOUNG MEN STEEPED IN TRADITION WHICH HOLDS, ORIGINALLY THE BLADE AND NOW THE MODERN GUN, A SYMBOL OF MANHOOD AS WELL AS RESPECTABILITY. THE OFFERS OF THE SECESSIONISTS AND THEIR FOREIGN SUPPORTERS,

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OF A GUN AND P2,000.00 PER REBEL TAKING TO THE HILLS, FURTHER SWELLED THE RANKS OF THE REBELS DURING THE LAST TWO YEARS.

THE ENTIRE HISTORY OF THE MUSLIMS IN THE PHILIPPINES SHOWS THAT THEY HAVE NEVER BEEN CONQUERED BY ANY KNOWN INVADER; NOT BY THE SPANIARDS, NOT BY THE DUTCH NOR THE AMERICANS NOR THE JAPANESE NOR THE ENGLISH. THEY ARE PROUD OF THIS TRADITION AND ARE PLEDGED TO THE MAINTENANCE OF THIS IMAGE. BECAUSE OF THEIR RELIGIOUS FANATICISM, DEDICATION TO THEIR CAUSE IS FURTHER HEIGHTENED.

THE GOVERNMENT FORCES HAVE NOW STARTED TO BUILD UP AND ARE PRESENTLY PREPARING TO COUNTER ATTACK. PRESENT STRENGTH OF GOVERNMENT FORCES IS 9,600. HOWEVER, THE GREATER NUMBER OF THEM ARE CONSTABULARY MEN (ENGAGED IN POLICE DUTIES AND TIED DOWN TO GARRISON DUTIES) CONSISTING OF DETACHMENTS SPREAD OUT SO THINLY THAT THEY ARE IN DANGER OF BEING WIPED OUT AS SOME HAVE ACTUALLY BEEN.

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 PM-09 NSC-10 SS-14 RSC-01 T-03 L-03

CIAE-00 INR-09 NSAE-00 INRE-00 MC-02 AID-20 IGA-02

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P 091005 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3673

DOD WASHDC

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S E C R E T SECTION 3 OF 3 MANILA 2769

CINCPAC FOR ATTENTION OF ADMIRAL GAYLER

MORALE OF THE GOVERNMENT TROOPS IS HIGH. THEY HAVE REFUSED TO WITHDRAW NOTWITHSTANDING THE FACT THAT THEY ARE SURROUNDED AND OUTNUMBERED. THEY HAVE ASKED THAT THEY BE PERMITTED TO COUNTER ATTACK PROVIDED THEY ARE RESUPPLIED AND REINFORCED. GOVERNMENT FORCES IN LEBAK HAVE CAPTURED FIVE REBELS DURING THE INITIAL COUNTERATTACK AND HAVE WIDENED THEIR AREA BY 300 0 METERS IN ALL FRONTS.

IN THE LIGHT OF ALL THESE DEVELOPMENTS, THE FOLLOWING ARE OUR CONCLUSIONS:

1. A NEW DIMENSION IN THE FIGHTING IN MIN-DANAO HAS BEEN REACHED. OUR TROOPS ARE NOW ENGAGING IN COMBAT NOT ONLY INDIGENOUS REBEL FORCES RE-EQUIPPED WITH MODERN AND SOPHISTICATED FOREIGN- MADE ARMAMENTS BUT ALSO FOREIGN ARMED ELEMENTS WHO HAVE JOINED THE MUSLIM REVOLUTIONARY FORCES.

2. ALTHOUGH STILL IN PAPER, A REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT IS BEING ORGANIZED.

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3. THERE ARE CLEAR INDICATIONS THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT IS TO ESTABLISH AN INDEPENDENT STATE IN MINDANAO AND SULU.

4. THE REBELS HAVE BEEN ASSURED OF A CONTINUING SUPPLY OF ARMAMENTS, AMMUNITION AND FUNDS BY THEIR FOREIGN SPONSORS/ SYMPATHIZERS. OTHERWISE, THEY COULD NOT HAVE TAKEN THE INITIATIVE TO LAUNCH AN OFFENSIVE.

5. THE REBELS USE THE SEA LANES EXTENSIVELY IN THEIR LOGISTIC RUNS AND EVIDENCED BY THE CONTINUOUS FLOW OF SEA TRAFFIC TO SULU, BASILAN, AND COTABATO MOSTLY FROM SABAH.

6. THE ACTIVITIES OF THE MUSLIM REBELS IN MINDANAO DO NOT THREATEN THE STABILITY OF THE REPUBLIC. HOWEVER, THEY MAY MAKE POSSIBLE THE SEQUESTRATION OF PHILIPPINE TERRITORY AND THE EXERCISE OF EXTRANEIOUS SOVEREIGNTY OVER FILIPINOS AND OTHERS LIVING THEREIN.

IN VIEW OF THESE, I HAVE THE HONOR TO RECOMMEND THE FOLLOWING:

1. THAT OUR SEATO ALLIES AND ASEAN PARTNERS BE APPRISED OF THE SITUATION.

2. THAT THE US- RP MUTUAL DEFENSE BOARD UNDER OUR MUTUAL DEFENSE AND ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT BE CONVENED.

3. THAT OUR CAPABILITY OF COUNTER- ACTION IN MINDANAO AND SULU BE INCREASED.

4. THAT AT LEAST TEN (10) FULL STRENGTH BATTALION COMBAT TEAMS EQUIPPED WITH ARMOR AND SUPPORT WEAPONS AND PROVIDED WITH ADEQUATE NAVAL AND AIR SUPPORT BE SENT TO REINFORCE OUR PRESENT TROOPS IN MINDANAO.

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5. THAT A MILITARY ADMINISTRATION IN MUSLIM
AREAS NOA UNDER CONTROL OF THE REBELS BE ESTABLISHED.

6. THAT SHORT RANGE AND LONG RANGE PROGRAMS
FOR THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE
MUSLIM AREAS BE ADOPTED. IN THE MRANTIME, THE
MEASURES THAT HAVE ALREADY BEEN INITIATED BY
CIVILIAN AND MILITARY AUTHORITIES BE IMPLEMENTED.

7. THAT WE PROCURE MILITARY ASSISTANCE FROM
ALL AVAILABLE SOURCES IN ORDER TO MATCH THE PRESENT
CAPABILITIES OF THE ENEMY.

8. THAT THE AFP BE GRANTED AUTHORITY TO
IMMEDIATELY INCREASE IN STRENGTH AND TO PROCURE
THE BADLY NEEDED ARMAMENTS, AMMUNITION, EQUIPMENT
AND SUPPLIES WHICH ARE NOW SEVERELY DEFICIENT.

SIGNED GENERAL ESPINO. END TEXT.

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*** Current Classification *** SECRET

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